THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

REPORT ON THE 2004 BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

THIRD REPORT
FOURTH SESSION, THIRTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

November 14, 2003

To the Honourable,
The Legislative Assembly of the
Province of British Columbia
Victoria, British Columbia

Honourable Members:

I have the honour to present herewith the Third Report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

The Third Report covers the work of the Committee on the pre-budget consultation process.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Brenda Locke, MLA
Chair

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Brenda Locke, MLA	Chair	Surrey-Green Timbers
Brian Kerr, MLA	Deputy Chair	Malahat-Juan de Fuca
Bill Belsey, MLA		North Coast
Jeff Bray, MLA		Victoria-Beacon Hill
Ida Chong, MLA		Oak Bay-Gordon Head
Arnie Hamilton, MLA		Esquimalt-Metchosin
Dave Hayer, MLA		Surrey-Tynehead
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Lorne Mayencourt, MLA		Vancouver-Burrard
Wendy McMahon, MLA		Columbia River-Revelstoke
John Nuraney, MLA		Burnaby-Willingdon
Patty Sahota, MLA		Burnaby-Edmonds

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk Assistant and Committee Clerk

COMMITTEE RESEARCHERS

Josie Schofield, Research Analyst

Jonathan Fershau, Robert Parker, Mary Walter, Researchers

TERMS OF REFERENCE

On April 9, 2003, the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services was appointed and empowered:

To examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to the pre-budget consultation report prepared by the Minister of Finance in accordance with section 2 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* and, in particular, to:

(a) Conduct public consultations across British Columbia on proposals and recommendations regarding the provincial budget and fiscal policy for the coming fiscal year by any means the committee considers appropriate, including but not limited to public meetings, telephone and electronic means;

(b) Prepare a report no later than November 15, 2003 on the results of those consultations.

In addition to the powers previously conferred upon the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, the committee shall be empowered:

a) to appoint of their number one or more subcommittees and refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the committee;

b) to sit during a period in which the House is adjourned and during any sitting of the House;

c) to adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and

d) to retain personnel as required to assist the committee;

and shall report to the House as soon as possible, or following any adjournment or at the next following session, as the case may be, to deposit the original of its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly during a period of adjournment and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, the Chair shall present all reports to the Legislative Assembly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee wishes to express its appreciation to everyone who assisted in our work. In particular, we would like to thank the hundreds of British Columbians who took the time from their busy lives to participate in the pre-budget consultation process.

The Committee was struck by the high quality and thoughtfulness of the oral presentations and written submissions. We would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of these individuals and organizations, as their involvement was fundamental to our work and to this important process.

In addition, the Committee would like to thank the many individuals, including local government representatives, whom we met during our site visits. These individuals provided us with a unique and valuable opportunity to learn more about their communities, and the industries that sustain them.

The Committee would also like to recognize the role of Hansard Services in producing the transcripts of our meetings. We would like to thank, in particular, the seven console operators who traveled with us to the 11 public hearings —Jane Berry, Lisa Coburn, Wendy Collisson, Virginia Garrow, Pamela Holmes, Amanda Heffelfinger, and Marilyn Pollard.

The Committee would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the staff from the Office of the Clerk of Committees. Mary Newell and Jacqueline Quesnel handled the complicated travel arrangements for the 11 public hearings, coordinated arrangements for our four site visits, as well as scheduling witnesses. Josie Schofield, our Research Analyst, provided research support throughout the process, with the assistance of Mary Walter, Jonathan Fershau and Rob Parker. And finally, Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk Assistant and Committee Clerk, provided administrative and procedural advice throughout the consultation process.

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

On April 9, 2003, the House instructed the 13 members of the all-party Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to conduct public consultations across British Columbia with respect to the 2004 Budget, and to report on the consultation process by November 15, 2003. This year marks the fourth time the Finance Committee has undertaken pre-budget consultation hearings, in accordance with section 2 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*.

The Minister of Finance released the *Budget 2004 Consultation Paper* on September 10, 2003, asking British Columbians for input on their priorities for the next provincial budget and suggestions for the allocation of financial resources. For the first time, the consultation paper included the government's response to the priority areas identified by the public in last year's committee report.

In line with past practice, the consultation paper also included a questionnaire asking British Columbians what small changes they would make in program priorities for the next two fiscal years, given the current economic and revenue outlook. The public's views were also sought on what the government's fiscal priorities should be in 2005/06 and 2006/07, when additional funds could be available, and on how the government should deal in the future with revenue shortfalls and the need to cover extraordinary costs from disasters.

To solicit public input, the Finance Committee visited 11 different communities between September 17 and October 17, 2003. During the first half of our tour, we conducted site visits before holding public hearings in Courtenay, Prince Rupert, Dawson Creek and Kamloops. The other communities we visited were Prince George, Cranbrook, Penticton and the urban centres of Vancouver, Victoria, Surrey and Burnaby. British Columbians who were unable to attend the hearings were asked to submit written briefs by October 17, 2003.

During the pre-budget consultation process, the Committee heard from 216 individuals and organizations, which represented business and professional associations, labour unions, local governments, stakeholders in the education and health sectors, as well as community groups and individual citizens. In total, 169 oral presentations were made at the 11 public hearings, and 47 written submissions were sent directly to the Office of the Clerk of Committees.

A list of all the organizations that participated in the 2004 Budget consultation process is contained in Appendix B of this report. The schedule of meetings and the witness list are also included as appendices. Minutes and transcripts of the Committee's public meetings and an electronic copy of this report are available on the Internet at: www.leg.bc.ca/cmt.

SITE VISITS

This year, for the first time, the Finance Committee conducted site visits as part of its pre-budget consultation process. Recognizing that the province has a diverse economy, we decided to learn more about the local situation in resource-dependent communities in the heartlands.

During the first two weeks of our provincewide tour, we participated in site visits in Courtenay, Prince Rupert, Dawson Creek and Kamloops, before conducting the scheduled public hearings. Unfortunately, due to bad weather conditions, we were forced to cancel our planned tour of the Canfor site in Prince George.

COURTENAY (SEPTEMBER 17, 2003)

"Committee Members met with Lijen Hua of Hua & Wong Enterprises Corp. at his wasabi farm. (Courtenay, September 17, 2003)"

The Comox Valley, where Courtenay is situated, has a well-developed agricultural sector, with over 300 farms, and an active local farming community. Aquaculture is also a significant source of past and future economic growth for the Comox Valley, with Baynes Sound accounting for over half of all shellfish production by value in BC. In terms of growth, aquaculture has outperformed nearly every other industry in the BC economy since 1984.

To learn more, the Finance Committee took part in a bus tour of local farms organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, and the Comox Valley Farmers Institute. We joined 24 local government representatives who were also interested in seeing firsthand agri-food production and an aquaculture site.

The first stop on the farm tour was an experimental geoduck nursery system at a new facility operated by Manatee Holdings. We observed a small inlet area that had been modified to create a saltwater pond designed to encourage natural plankton blooms. This operation has committed itself to high standards of facility aesthetics, so as to minimize any industrial impact on the nearby residential area.

Our next stop was Grassi Point Farm Market, which featured a wide array of locally grown fruits, vegetables and value-added regional products. We then moved on to the wasabi farm owned by Hua & Wong Enterprises Corp., where we sampled some innovative food products. We also visited Tannadice hog and beef farm, McGinnis berry farm and toured Lloydhaven dairy farm facility.

The farm tour has given us a greater understanding of the farming opportunities available in the Comox Valley and the important role agriculture plays in the provincial economy. The farm operators we met, however, felt that the general public does not really appreciate the economic contribution of agriculture to the province. They also complained about the regulatory burden imposed by government agencies, particularly the federal fisheries department.

Prince Rupert (September 18, 2003)

Like many resource towns, Prince Rupert has been hard hit by problems in the fishing industry and forestry — including the ongoing softwood lumber dispute, and weak economic performance. As a result, the residents of Prince Rupert are looking at opportunities to diversify the economy, via tourism, fish farms, oil and gas development, small business growth, value-added forestry, marine harvesting, expansion of the port facilities and the cruise ship terminal.

To learn more, the Committee toured the extensive industrial facilities and infrastructure in the community to see firsthand the economic challenges and opportunities. Our bus tour included the Wedeene River Sawmill, the McMillan Fish Plant, the New Skeena Pulp Mill, and the deep-sea Port of Prince Rupert (including Prince Rupert Grain and the Ridley Coal Terminal).

By far the most striking aspect of the tour was the lack of activity at the port in Prince Rupert. To see forklifts sitting idle on the dock was a dramatic reminder of the current economic challenges facing the North Coast. At the same time, we were impressed by the amazing spirit and determination of the workers we met. They shared with us their vision for overcoming the city's problems and for reviving the economy of their community.

We learned that things are looking up for the cruise ship terminal in Prince Rupert, as bookings for 2004 are higher than anticipated. Also on the horizon are the prospects of new container facilities at the port by 2005, and further down the road, the potential benefits of offshore oil and gas exploration.

Dawson Creek (September 29, 2003)

Forestry, tourism, and the expanding oil and gas industry provide Dawson Creek and its residents with a diversified, stable economic base. A serious labour shortage is the main challenge facing the local community.

In Dawson Creek, the Committee attended the trade show and opening reception of the 2003 Oil and Gas Conference. We met with industry representatives, government officials, community leaders and First Nations who had come together to discuss issues affecting the oil and gas sector. We also met with the local mayor and city council members.

During our visit, we were struck by the level of optimism about the long-term future for the oil and gas sector and the potential growth of secondary industries, as well as by the sense of community pride among the residents of Dawson Creek. Adding to the boomtown atmosphere was the amount of road construction and the number of new trucks we noticed on our way to and from the airport. The prospect of a new hotel and convention centre and the arrival of Wal-Mart are also seen as economic drivers for the city. In addition, the relatively low housing costs are seen as incentives to attract skilled workers and their families to the oil patch.

Kamloops (October 2, 2003)

"Following their visit to the Kamloops Fire Centre and Provincial Airtanker Centre, Committee Members toured the Strawberry Hill interface fire area with Steve Schell, Forest Protection Technician, Kamloops Fire Zone. (Kamloops, October 2, 2003)"

This summer, the interior of British Columbia experienced an unprecedented number of volatile forest fires in close proximity to urban areas. The Kamloops forest protection region was hit particularly hard. Record-breaking high temperatures and record low levels of precipitation throughout the region fuelled a total of 743 fires, consuming more than 104,000 hectares. Fire-related costs in the province for 2003/04 are currently estimated at $545 million.

To assess the devastation, the Committee met with Forest Service officials in charge of the Provincial Airtanker Centre and the Kamloops Fire Centre. We were impressed by the

technology and techniques employed by staff to deploy resources to monitor and fight provincial forest fires. The professionalism, dedication, and determination of all we met were certainly evident and impressive. As well, we felt that the hard work and willingness of public servants and volunteers alike to help out during the fires epitomized the BC spirit.

We also visited the fire site at Strawberry Hill and were struck by the destructive impact of this interface fire. The Strawberry Hill fire started adjacent to Highway 5 near the Kamloops suburb of Rayleigh. In total, the fire consumed more than 5,700 hectares, and caused the evacuation of more than 5,000 people. The combination of the Strawberry Hill/McLure fires shut down the Yellowhead Highway for several days. Later in the day, we flew over the Barriere and McLure region, observing stark evidence of barren forestland, as well as destroyed homes and businesses.

The Committee would like to thank again all the people we met during the site visits for sharing their knowledge and ideas. All of the committee members agree that this new opportunity has given us a greater appreciation of the different challenges facing resource-dependent communities and, equally important, the opportunities for economic development in British Columbia.

THE PUBLIC'S RESPONSE TO THE FISCAL PLAN

Context

Since the 2002 pre-budget consultation process, several unanticipated events have affected the performance of the provincial economy and placed additional demands on the provincial treasury. These events include the major slowdown in the US economy, the SARS outbreak, the fallout from the mad cow incident in Alberta, the worst forest fire season on record, the ongoing Canada-US softwood lumber dispute and a sharply appreciating dollar in 2003 that has affected the export sector. As well, very recently, the province has also had to deal with the flood damage caused by record rainfall.

In all the regions the Committee visited, it was apparent that the public was well aware of the additional pressures these external challenges have placed on the three-year spending targets in the government's fiscal plan. Within this context, we received valuable input on how future budgets may be fine-tuned and improved so as to deliver the best and most efficient services to British Columbians. The public's proposals ranged from requests for modest amounts of program spending through to significant investments in education, health and transportation infrastructure; and pleas were also made for tax policy changes. In cases where we received valuable information that applied to areas of public policy beyond our mandate, we have forwarded the witnesses' testimony on to the appropriate ministries for follow-up action.

As in previous years, the Committee has been impressed by how informed and passionate the witnesses are about their issues. Based on what we have heard and read, we have identified five key themes that communicate the public's response to the government's current fiscal plan.

1. Stay the course and balance the budget

Many presenters recognized that the government has had to make difficult decisions concerning spending priorities in order to balance the province's books by 2004/05. The Committee also heard time and time again the message that the government must stay on track with its fiscal plan, particularly from the business community and concerned taxpayers. While some of these witnesses offered suggestions about how to reallocate program spending, they believed that balancing the provincial budget must be the government's first priority. Some of their comments were:

> *"We recommend that the government stay the course on eliminating the annual deficit in 2004/05."* (Vancouver Board of Trade)

> *"As a private citizen, the main concern I have is that everybody's wanting more money. My message is: don't keep looking for places to spend money; look for places to save money."* (Patrick Rogers, Kamloops)

> *"You made a promise, and we believe you will stick to it. The single most important outcome for the 2004-2005 budget is a set of balanced books. Your commitment is to be applauded. Our support for you in this regard is unwavering."* (Institute of Chartered Accountants of BC)

"We strongly support balancing the budget in 2004/05. Staying the course and continuing to adhere to the current three-year fiscal plan can accomplish this goal." (Retail BC; Retail Council of Canada)

"We commend the government for its strong commitment to a balanced budget by the end of the next fiscal year. And we urge the government to stay on this course, as we believe that in the long run, it is essential in restoring the economic health we all want for our province." (Lignum Ltd.)

"I want to make it very clear that I want this government to continue on the path it is taking. I think that they have righted a ship that was off target and off line." (Neil MacKay, Burnaby)

"The critical message we got through our membership survey is: stay the course you are on right now. It is absolutely imperative that this budget be balanced in 2004/05." (Canadian Taxpayers Federation)

2. Stay focused on economic development

Another loud and clear message we heard is that the public wants the government to stay focused on economic development, so as to encourage the investment that will provide employment and educational opportunities in every region of the province and economic and social benefits for all British Columbians. Some presenters suggested that government itself could play a direct role in facilitating economic revitalization by relocating the head offices of resource ministries in heartland communities.

As we toured the province, it was clear that the government is on the right track in not endorsing a one-size-fits-all approach to economic development. The communities we visited have different economic circumstances that require different solutions. For example, in Prince Rupert, we heard about the need to develop and promote the port as an integral component of exporting BC products to the global marketplace. Then in Dawson Creek, the case was made for a reduced, or graduated, provincial sales tax in the Peace and the East Kootenays so as to be competitive with Alberta. In Prince George, Penticton and Cranbrook, the need for economic diversification and community-driven economic development strategies to promote opportunities in tourism and hi-tech was stressed.

In the urban centres of the province, a strong pitch was made for greater promotion of British Columbia as a place to do business and invest in. In Vancouver, for example, the financial services industry urged the government to proceed with its plan to upgrade the international financial centre legislation. As well, in both rural and urban areas, the need for a tourism marketing strategy for the 2010 Winter Olympics was highlighted. Here is a sample of what we heard in different regions of the province:

"We don't want handouts. We believe the government's role is to referee a level playing field, facilitate a positive business environment, and then step back and watch us grow." (Prince Rupert and District Chamber of Commerce)

"By reducing the PST, we'll keep retail shopping dollars in BC, we'll recapture the retail sales jobs that have been lost to Alberta, and we'll build complete communities in the Peace and the East Kootenays." (City of Dawson Creek)

"From an economic development perspective, the province needs to establish and build a relationship with the regions to recruit new business and retain existing investment." (Initiatives Prince George)

"We encourage the government to investigate a different approach to community economic development — one that would enhance rather than encumber a community's ability to meet the challenge, one that would allow communities to meet their needs during the different stages of development, one that would help them identify and build on their strengths." (Destination Osoyoos)

"Communities like Cranbrook need other industry, and we need the province's help in obtaining it." (Cranbrook Chamber of Commerce; Cranbrook Development Authority)

"We are currently witnessing a disturbing decline in Vancouver's asset management community. However, the proposed amendments to the IFC legislation are designed to create a level playing field from which British Columbia will once again be able to attract a large number of financially oriented businesses. It will also ensure that those companies already located here will have every reason to remain in this province." (IFCVancouver)

"With the Olympics coming, we have an unparalleled opportunity to promote BC to the world. Already, international media attention is building. That's why as we lead up to the Games, the issue of tourism promotion is key. Telling our story to the world and drawing more people to BC, as we did with Expo 86, must be a high priority, but we must be careful how we proceed." (BC Restaurant and Food Services Association)

"If Expo 86 was the dawn of a new era for tourism in the province, the 2010 Olympics are the culmination of that era and the launch of the twenty-first century, with all the potential that it holds. The industry is rising to the challenge. We ask that the province become our partner and help ensure that the funds, resources and commitment are there. Together we can accomplish all we have set out to do." (Thompson-Okanagan Industry Association)

3. Carry on cutting red tape

Another recurring theme we heard during the consultation process was the need for government to continue to pursue deregulation opportunities. While developers, small businesses and financial institutions were pleased with the progress made to date, they reported that red tape was still a problem. Their specific concerns were the regulations relating to employment standards and the WCB, the collection of the provincial sales tax, and the rules governing the capital and liquidity requirements of credit unions. Some of their comments were:

"We strongly support the focus on reduced regulations, but we would like, of course, to still see some other changes made. The one we feel is a bit of a nuisance is that any workers under 15 years old have to get permission from their school principals — not from their parents — in order to work on a farm. We feel that rule is unreasonable. So we would like that one changed for sure." (BC Fruit Growers' Association)

"While our members are supportive of the government's deregulation initiative, they report that they are not yet feeling the impacts of the regulatory reduction. So continue to work towards reducing the regulatory burden by one-third; focus on areas such as employment standards, WCB and PST that are most harmful to businesses; and continue publishing counts of regulatory requirements by ministry, once the one-third target is met." (Canadian Federation of Independent Business)

"In many areas of British Columbia, we have small businesses wanting to invest in their companies, but the borrowing facilities are not available or are too costly. To leverage this opportunity, the government must alter the capital requirements regulation by increasing the concentration risk adjustment factor from 20 to 30 percent of a credit union's portfolio, and it must reduce the statutory liquidity requirements from 10 percent to 8 percent in order to enable us to become financing providers to these businesses and to play a more meaningful role in the community and in regional economic development." (East Kootenay Community Credit Union)

4. Continue to address the skills-shortage issue

Another recurring theme we heard was the need for ongoing action to tackle the looming shortage of skilled workers in the province, particularly in the construction industry. Employers, labour unions, educators, and parents all identified the lack of qualified tradespeople as a serious impediment to economic growth. They pointed out that in a variety of occupations — whether framers, electricians, tourism operators, or oil-patch workers — there are not enough skilled workers to meet current, let alone, future demand.

The Committee also learned that currently in British Columbia preparation for university education is accorded higher status than for trades education. To tackle this problem, a construction skills council has recently been formed in Victoria by home builders, school districts and other agencies to define training skills and employment opportunities in the construction industry. Presenters at other hearings also suggested that programs introducing high school students to careers in skilled trades should be maintained and even expanded. Here is a sample of their comments:

"With the increase in construction activity, we are seeing a shortfall in certain skilled trades and many of our members have expressed their concern that this problem will increase in coming years.... More attention needs to be placed on the secondary school apprenticeship program." (British Columbia Construction Association)

"We've been trying for a long time to attract quality, skilled people to our company, and our situation is no different from the rest of the general skill-shortage issues that

you're all aware of. But where we are lacking is that the training resources for those skilled people are not close at hand." (Prince Rupert Grain)

"Opportunities are emerging, but we need to invest in the development of a local workforce. Industries such as value-added wood manufacturing, specialty agriculture, aquaculture, oil and gas, mining, tourism, and transportation represent significant growth potential. We cannot sustain long-term meaningful rural development and build strong local economies if we parachute in skilled workers from elsewhere to meet the workforce needs of these emerging industries." (Northwest Community College)

"The College is facing increased demand for new or expanded programs. Within the next five years, there will be a critical skills shortage in trades and technical areas.... The northern and rural areas of the province are the most severely affected. This is the time to start preparing to meet these shortages." (College of New Caledonia)

"It's important for young people in high schools today to be able to see a path that would lead them to becoming a professional builder. That's what we're trying to establish right now." (Canadian Home Builders' Association of Victoria)

5. Expand high-speed Internet access throughout BC

Another clear message the Committee heard is that government needs to complete its plan to provide every community in the province with broadband, or high-speed, Internet access. At the Island hearings and in Prince Rupert and Cranbrook, presenters stated that bridging the digital divide — by using the government's own technological infrastructure — would allow remote rural communities to access e-commerce opportunities, to provide on-line learning opportunities, and to improve health services and community life generally. The Mayor of Prince George also stressed the economic benefits of extending a dormant fibre network in his city to the downtown core. Here is a sample of what we heard:

"We'd like to address, specifically, two policy directives of the BC government. One is to bridge what has become known as the digital divide that keeps rural and remote communities from receiving broadband or high-capacity Internet access. The other directive is to reduce provincial administrative spending. We encourage the government to do both by using its infrastructure and IT services' purchasing power to leverage broadband access for all BC communities." (Strathcona Broadband Initiative; North Island Broadband Initiative)

"Government can take a lead role in addressing the challenges faced by our remote north coast communities by making a small, ongoing, investment in technological infrastructure costs. The dividends flowing from this investment, for both the province and for our small isolated communities, can be enormous." (Resources Access and Information Network Project)

"The government has the ability to direct dollars already being spent on connectivity for its agencies to local, regional networks. The BC Community Champions Consortium has the experience and expertise necessary to establish the networks." (Columbia Mountain Open Network)

THE PUBLIC'S PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE BUDGETS

Context

The Minister of Finance's *Budget 2004 Consultation Paper* included a questionnaire asking British Columbians for their views on what the government's priorities should be for the next three budgets, which are required to be balanced under the fiscal plan. Within this context, the first question asked the public to suggest some changes to fine-tune and improve the plan in 2004/05. The next question asked people to rank their preferences if additional funds were available in the future, through revenue growth and careful fiscal management. Finally, public input was sought on how the government should deal with revenue shortfalls and the need to cover extraordinary costs from disasters, such as the extreme forest fires.

Once again, the Committee has to report that only a few witnesses used the questionnaire as the framework for their testimony. Nonetheless, the members of the public who participated in the consultation process certainly made it clear to us what their fiscal priorities are for future budgets.

2004 Budget

Question 1: The government intends to maintain the overall spending targets set out in the current three-year fiscal plan that leads to the balanced budget beginning in 2004/05. However, some changes to fine-tune and improve the plan could be made in 2004/05 and 2005/06 by moving small amounts of money from one priority area to another. If small changes were to be made, what should they be?

We heard various suggestions for fine-tuning and improving the first balanced budget in 2004/05. The public tended to favour reallocating small amounts of money for post-secondary education, community services, alternative health care programs and child care, particularly where funding changes have already been made or are imminent.

As well, there were urgent requests for immediate assistance to help residents and small businesses affected by the devastating forest fires in the interior. Emergency relief was also sought for cattle breeders affected by the BSE scare.

2005 and 2006 Budgets

Question 2: After balancing the budget in 2004/05, revenue growth and continued fiscal management may provide additional funds in future years. These funds could be allocated to priority programs, tax cuts, debt reduction or some combination of these options. In what proportions would you allocate any available funds in 2005/06 and 2006/07?

The witnesses were certainly not shy about telling the government what it should do with additional funds in future years, from budget surpluses. What they were reticent to do,

though, was to specify how additional funds should be allocated to the various options — priority programs, tax cuts, or debt reduction.

Broadly speaking, the public's priorities for future budgets can be summarized as follows:

- *Invest in post-secondary education, health care innovations and transportation improvements, to further stimulate economic growth and job creation*
- *Reduce the provincial sales tax by 0.5 percent*
- *Pay down the debt to reduce the burden on future generations of taxpayers*

Post-secondary education

The Committee was struck by the consensus among witnesses representing different sectors of the economy that any additional funding in future years should go first to improve access to public post-secondary education. College and university administrators, faculty and students, the business community, labour unions and concerned citizens all agreed that investment in knowledge and innovation is the key to future economic growth, and also that the access issue was a significant and widespread concern.

In terms of spending priorities, the major message was the need for more operational and capital funding to meet the increasing demand for access to colleges and universities. While the capital construction program was cited as a good start, the Committee heard that even more student spaces are required.

The Committee was also advised that post-secondary opportunities could be created through the commercialization of university research and by innovative programs involving industry, which would help supply the province with knowledge workers. The University Presidents' Council of British Columbia also recommended that the government continue to support the BC Knowledge Development Fund in collaboration with the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

Health care

Regarding additional funding for health services, there was some reluctance on the part of the business community to endorse an increase in ministry spending targets, once future budgets are balanced. Representatives of the Vancouver Board of Trade, for example, stated that no more money should be allocated to health care in the longer term without significant improvements in productivity and management processes and an improved hybrid public-private sector approach to the provision of facilities and services. They also suggested that government continue to work with the federal government to update the *Canada Health Act* so as to improve health care outcomes. Other presenters recommended that government pursue partnerships with academia and industry to develop and implement new strategies, such as disease management programs and drug utilization reviews, that are targeted at improving overall health system efficiencies.

Another message we heard was that further R and D investment would open the doors for more made-in-Canada life-saving and life-improving health care treatments. Specific requests for developing and implementing health care innovations included infrastructure and operational funding for life sciences research. A plea was also made for stable funding for the cost-saving and pioneering deep-brain stimulation procedure.

Transportation improvements

More investment in transportation improvements emerged as the public's top priority for other spending. The Committee heard from community leaders in the northwest about the need for improved transportation links to access and then transport the province's natural resources to BC ports and beyond. We also heard the message that the province needs to alleviate congestion at choke points in urban areas. Some specific suggestions for targeting additional funding were:

- *Construct access roads to resource-rich areas, particularly in northern BC*
- *Replace the Okanagan Lake bridge*
- *Implement a comprehensive highways infrastructure program in the eastern lower mainland: including twinning the Port Mann Bridge, widening the Trans Canada Highway west and east of the Port Mann Bridge, and completing the construction of the South Fraser Perimeter Road*
- *Work with local and regional governments to invest in priority projects for infrastructure investments in the transportation sector around the movement of goods in the lower mainland*
- *Work with communities on expansion plans for regional airports*

Tax policy

The Committee heard a variety of suggestions about how to reduce the taxes paid by British Columbians, once the fiscal situation improves. Developers and realtors in the province, for example, suggested eliminating the property transfer tax for one year on a trial basis in areas hardest hit by forest fires and by the ongoing softwood lumber dispute to stimulate economic recovery. We also heard pleas for the luxury tax on new vehicles to be reduced, or eliminated, and for corporate tax rates to remain competitive with other jurisdictions.

What came across most clearly, though, was the need for the government to focus its tax reform efforts on the provincial sales tax. The Retail Council of Canada recommended reducing the PST by at least 0.5 percent. And the Institute of Chartered Accountants of British Columbia urged the government to look at the harmonization of provincial and federal sales taxes, claiming harmonization could result in considerable savings in administrative costs, to the tune of some $22 million.

Another message the Committee heard from the business community was the need for government to simplify the process for PST remittance. Current problems arising with respect to sales tax collection include: the very large and complicated list of exemptions that exist in the retail categories, the frequency with which PST must be remitted to government, as well as inconsistent practices associated with PST audits.

Debt reduction

Another clear message we heard is that some of the surplus in future years should be used to pay down the provincial debt. The public thought it was important for the government to have a long-term debt management plan that allowed for fluctuations in the economy and could also be measured against targets set over a three-year cycle. This plan would be a signal to investors outside British Columbia that they would not be stuck with a large amount of future taxes to reduce the debt, if they invested here.

Some witnesses proposed allocating the entire surplus for debt reduction, while others recommended setting aside only a portion of the additional funds. Despite the lack of consensus on the ratio, small business owners, professionals and concerned taxpayers agreed on the desirability of targeting some funds in future budgets for debt reduction.

Contingency Management

Question 3: Fluctuations in the world and Canadian economies inevitably pose a risk to government's three-year plan. Disasters, such as the extreme forest fires we have experienced this year, can also place big demands on the provincial budget. How should the government deal with revenue shortfalls and the need to cover extraordinary costs from disasters, given that government is required by law to balance the budget every year starting in 2004/05?

Only a few witnesses responded to the question concerning the need for contingency funds to deal with revenue shortfalls and to cover extraordinary costs from disasters. In general, the Committee heard support for government to continue with its existing plan for operational contingency funding, but to ensure that the 2004 Budget and future budgets always include forecast allowances.

Besides adequate contingency funds, other specific suggestions for covering the unanticipated costs of disasters included using conservative growth projections, and partnering with municipal, provincial and federal governments on a national disaster mitigation strategy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee supports the government's intention to balance the next and future budgets.

During our pre-budget consultation tour, we were struck by the economic potential that exists in both the rural and urban areas of the province. Therefore we think it is very important for the government to maintain its focus on economic development to ensure that prosperity is shared throughout British Columbia. At the same time, we were reminded that red tape remains an impediment to economic development.

We endorse and encourage the efforts of government to overcome the digital divide and provide British Columbians with access to high-speed Internet services.

We also think the government needs to focus on publicizing the new model for apprenticeship training in order to address the public's concerns about the lack of skilled tradespeople in the province's labour market. Furthermore, we endorse recommendation 4(c) of the 2002 Report of the Select Standing Committee on Education about the need for the province to ensure that learners and parents are informed about the future employment opportunities available in skilled trades.

In terms of future program spending, we strongly endorse the public's preference for more funding for the public post-secondary system — particularly to tackle access issues. We believe there must be more opportunities for British Columbians, with the appropriate competencies, to access our post-secondary opportunities — be they provincial colleges and universities, or private sector training institutions. As well, the province as a whole benefits from having a more educated workforce.

We also think that investment in health innovations and transportation improvements is essential for the future economic prosperity of the province.

Finally, we think it would be appropriate to consider fine-tuning tax policy and to tackle the burden of debt, once the budget is balanced.

The Committee recommends:

1. That the government stay the course and balance the upcoming and future budgets.
2. That the government keep moving on the BC Heartlands Economic Strategy.
3. That the government continue its regulatory reform initiatives, with a focus on further reductions of red tape.
4. That the government complete its plan to bridge the digital divide and stay focused on technological innovation.
5. That the government move ahead with the new trades training model.
6. That a career path initiative be developed in the high school system to inform learners and parents about apprenticeship programs and the other opportunities available for skills training, and that school districts be encouraged to offer these opportunities in high schools.

7. That the government provide additional funds in future years for post-secondary education, as they become available.
8. That the government allocate some portion of future surpluses for health care innovations.
9. That the government continue to invest in improving the province's roads and highways, and to work with communities to improve air service and airports throughout the province.
10. That the government simplify the PST.
11. That the government pursue a debt management plan and reduce the debt, once the budget is balanced.

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

April 29, 2003	Victoria	Organization
May 14, 2003	Victoria	Planning Session
September 17, 2003	Courtenay	Public Hearing
September 18, 2003	Prince Rupert	Public Hearing
September 29, 2003	Dawson Creek	Public Hearing
September 30, 2003	Prince George	Public Hearing
October 1, 2003	Cranbrook	Public Hearing
October 1, 2003	Penticton	Public Hearing
October 2, 2003	Kamloops	Public Hearing
October 2, 2003	Vancouver	Public Hearing
October 7, 2003	Victoria	Briefing
October 8, 2003	Victoria	Public Hearing
October 10, 2003	Surrey	Public Hearing
October 17, 2003	Burnaby	Public Hearing
October 22, 2003	Victoria	Deliberations
October 29, 2003	Victoria	Deliberations
November 3, 2003	Victoria	Deliberations
November 4, 2003	Victoria	Deliberations

APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONS TAKING PART IN THE 2004 BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	POPULATION
Municipalities	
City of Dawson Creek (Mayor Wayne Dahlen)	10,755
City of Kimberley (Mayor Ron McRae)	6,498
City of Prince George (Mayor Colin Kinsley)	72,405
City of Penticton (Mayor David Perry)	30,980
Municipal Associations	
North Central Municipal Association	33 municipalities in 7 regional districts

FIRST NATIONS	
Shuswap Indian Band; KINBASKET Group of Companies	

ADVISORY COUNCILS	
Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council	n/a
Premier's Technology Council	n/a

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	MEMBERSHIP
Aquila Networks Canada Ltd.	400 employees
BC Agriculture Council	10,000
BC Association of Social Workers	n/a
BCADA – The New Car Dealers of BC	340 dealers
BC Chamber of Commerce	27,000 firms
BC Construction Association	1,690 corporate members
BC Fruit Growers' Association	616 growers
BC Liquor Licensees & Retailers Association	800 outlets
BC Pharmacy Association	1,850 pharmacists
BC Real Estate Association	12,000 realtors
BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association	4,500 firms
BC Technology Industries Association	400 firms
Brewers of Canada	22,000 employees (BC)
Business Council of BC	185 firms
Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies	n/a
Canadian Bankers Association	27,000 bank employees
Canadian Bar Association – BC Branch	10,000 lawyers
Canadian Federation of Independent Business	10,000 (BC)
Canadian Home Builders' Association of Victoria	6,000 firms
Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, BC Division	n/a
Cement Association of Canada	310 employees (BC)
Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce	n/a
Cranbrook & District Chamber of Commerce	439 members
Davidson Yuen Simpson Architects	n/a

East Kootenay Credit Union	9,500 members
Elk Valley Coal Corporation	2,600 employees
Fire Chiefs' Association of BC	n/a
Fraser Valley Real Estate Board	1,900 realtors
Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association	400 firms
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce	1,650 firms
Hays, Stewart, Little & Co.	n/a
IFC Vancouver	33 members
Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of BC	500 firms
Industrial Alliance Pacific Life Insurance Company	350 employees
Institute of Chartered Accountants of BC	8,600 accountants
Insurance Bureau of Canada	120 firms
International Forest Products Ltd.	3,200 employees
Investment Dealers Association of Canada	9,500 people
Kootenay Livestock Association	n/a
KPMG	n/a
Labatt Breweries Western Canada	n/a
Lignum Ltd.	500 employees
Line Contractors' Association of BC	30 firms
LogicLynx Technologies Inc.	4 employees
Molson Brewery of Canada	300 direct and 175 indirect employees
Northern BC Construction Association	260 firms
Orangeville Raceway Ltd.	1,000 employees
Prince George Chamber of Commerce	950 businesses
Prince Rupert and District Chamber of Commerce	n/a
Prince Rupert Grain	125 employees
Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver	7,000 realtors
Retail BC	3,500 firms
Retail Council of Canada	9,000 retailers
Shaw Communications Inc.	2,150 employees
South Okanagan Real Estate Board	n/a
Surrey Chamber of Commerce	1,100 members
Telus	n/a
TimberWest Forest Corporation	n/a
Urban Development Institute	400 firms
Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre	225 FTEs
Vancouver Board of Trade	4,400 firms
Vancouver Island Advanced Technology Centre (VIATeC)	500 firms
Vancouver Regional Construction Association	600
Victoria Real Estate Board	95 members
Vista Project Management Corporation	n/a
WCG International Consultants Ltd.	130 employees
Westpoint Multimedia	n/a
Weyerhaeuser Co. Ltd.	5,000 employees

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISES

Comox Valley Economic Development Society	n/a
Cranbrook Development Authority	n/a
Destination Osoyoos	19 staff/directors

Gastown Business Improvement Society	70 property owners; 400 firms
Initiatives Prince George	11 employees
Northwest Corridor Development	71 organizations
Oliver and District Community Economic Development Society	n/a
Prince Rupert Economic Development Commission	4 employees
Surrey Tourism and Convention Association	100
Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association	400 firms
Greater Victoria Film Commission	n/a

LABOUR UNIONS	MEMBERSHIP
BC Council of Film Unions	10,000
BC Government and Service Employees' Union	62,000
Canadian Union of Public Employees, BC Division	68,000
College Institute Educators' Association of BC	7,000
Kimberley Teachers' Association	n/a
Okanagan Skaha Teachers' Union	500

EDUCATION SECTOR (K-12)

School Districts	
Kamloops/Thompson School District	16,394 students
Langley School District	20,216 students
Saanich School Board	9,169 students
Vancouver School Board	56,878 students
Parent Advisory Councils	
BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils	1,000 PACs
BC Parent Voices	403 parents
Consortium 43	n/a
Gladstone Secondary School	n/a
Lord Strathcona Elementary School	Families of 568 students
Other	
Federation of Independent School Associations	260 schools

EDUCATION SECTOR (POST-SECONDARY)

Colleges and Universities	
College of New Caledonia	24,000 students
Northwest Community College	n/a
University of British Columbia	40,000 students
University Presidents' Council of BC	n/a
Faculty Associations	
College of the Rockies Faculty Association	150 faculty
Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC	3,600 faculty
Kwantlen Faculty Association	800 faculty
University College of the Cariboo Faculty Association	550 faculty
Student Societies	
Canadian Federation of Students	140,000 (BC)
College of New Caledonia Students' Association	5,000 students
Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design Students Union	n/a

Malaspina Students' Union	11,000 students
Northwest Community College Students' Association	n/a
Okanagan University College Students Association	7,000 students
University of BC Alumni Association	150,000 students
Vancouver Community College Students Society	n/a

HEALTH SECTOR

Arthritis Society of BC and Yukon	n/a
BC Cancer Foundation	n/a
BC Schizophrenia Society	n/a
Canadian Heart Rhythm Task Force	n/a
Canadian National Institute for the Blind	17,000
NeuroPartners Canada	n/a
South Okanagan-Similkameen Brain Injury Society	n/a

COMMUNITY/VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Action Committee of People with Disabilities	n/a
AIDS Society of Kamloops	n/a
Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT)	9 employees
BC Association for Community Living	75 organizations
BC Federation of Fly Fishers	n/a
BC Wildlife Federation	30,000 members
Canadian Taxpayers Federation, BC Division	61,000
Child Care Advocacy Forum	4000
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC	n/a
Collaborative Visions Society	39 organizations
Columbia Mountain Open Network	Serves 13 regional districts
Comox Valley Accessibility Committee	n/a
Comox Valley Women's Resource Centre	n/a
Consumer Advocacy and Support for Homeowners Society (CASH)	n/a
Cornerstone Wellness Centre	n/a
Cridge Centre for the Family	n/a
Developmental Disabilities Association	2,000 clients
Focus on the Family (Canada) Association	n/a
Funcouver	n/a
Kamloops and District Fish & Game	n/a
Kamloops Child Development Society	n/a
Kamloops Fly Fishers	n/a
Kamloops Sexual Assault Counselling Centre	n/a
Lillooet Learning Communities Society	n/a
Nanaimo Search and Rescue	n/a
Naramata Centre	n/a
New Beginnings Baptist Church	n/a
Pacific Child and Family Enrichment Society	n/a
Patient Empowerment Society	n/a
Penticton and Area Women's Centre	n/a
ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria	n/a
Resources Access Information Network (RAIN) Project	17 community partners

Strathcona and North Island Broadband Initiative	n/a
Sunshine Coast Child Care Planning Committee	n/a
Vancouver Inner City Parents Group	n/a
Vancouver Island Open Network Society	n/a
Vancouver Save Our Schools	n/a
West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund	n/a

APPENDIX C: WITNESS LIST

Action Committee of People with Disabilities	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Carol Romanow	
AIDS Society of Kamloops	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Jo Rothenburger	
Aquila Networks Canada	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Mike Bradshaw	
Vince Arimare	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Arthritis Society, BC and Yukon Division	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Trudy Battaglio	
Tom Kemp	
ASPECT	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Norma Strachan	
BCADA - New Car Dealers of BC	
George Evans	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Mike Finneron	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Sherrold Haddad	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Glen Ringdal	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
BC Agriculture Council	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
George Hamilton	
Marcus Janzen	
Steve Thomson	
BC Association for Community Living	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Nancy Hoyano	
Clair Schuman	
BC Association of Social Workers	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Helen Kormendy	
BC Cancer Foundation	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Mary McNeil	
BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Terri Watson	
BC Council of Film Unions	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Tom Adair	
BC Federation of Fly Fishers	FGS-Sub-44
Art Lingren	
BC Government and Service Employees' Union	FGS-Sub-26
George Heyman	
BC Liquor Licensees and Retailers Association	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Dave Crown	
BC Parent Voices (representing 403 concerned parents)	FGS-Sub-24
Dianne Goldberg	
BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Geoffrey Howes	

BC Schizophrenia Society Gayle Tissington Mark Wish	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Wes Baker	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Marie Baptiste	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Randy Bartsch	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Gerhard Bender	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Jessica Bergen	29-Sep-03 (Dawson Creek)
Donna Bradley	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Brewers of Canada Greg D'Avignon Marko Dekovic	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
British Columbia Chamber of Commerce Steve Thomson John Winter	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
British Columbia Construction Association Michael Geoghegan	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association Penny Gambell Glen Lucas	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
British Columbia Pharmacy Association Marnie Mitchell	FGS-Sub-33
British Columbia Real Estate Association David Herman	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
British Columbia Technology Industries Association George Hunter	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
British Columbia Wildlife Federation Anthony Toth Robert Boswell	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby) FGS-Sub-33
British Columbia Wildlife Federation, Shuswap Region; Kamloops & District Fish and Game Association; Kamloops Flyfishers Association Trev Jeanes Hank Karpuk Don Tretheway	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Tony Brumell	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Business Council of British Columbia Jock Finlayson Jerry Lampert Ken Peacock	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
Don Cameron	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Vern Campbell	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies Bern Philip	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)

Canadian Bankers Association - Western Region Paul Griffin	FGS-Sub-22
Canadian Bar Assocation, BC Branch Frank Kraemer	FGS-Sub-29
Canadian Federation of Independent Business Laura Jones Jeff Nugent	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Canadian Federation of Students Michael Gardiner	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Canadian Heart Rhythm Task Force Suzanne Wilson	FGS-Sub-34
Canadian Home Builders' Association of Victoria Casey Edge Lee Lange	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, BC Division Colin Heartwell Werner Knittel	FGS-Sub-42
Canadian National Institute for the Blind Brian Given Albert Ruel	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Canadian Taxpayers Federation David Hanley	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Canadian Union of Public Employees, BC Division Barry O'Neill	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Cement Association of Canada Derek Townson	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
David Charbonneau	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Child Care Advocacy Forum Sharon Gregson	FGS-Sub-10
City of Dawson Creek Councillor Alvin Stedel Gary Williams	29-Sep-03 (Dawson Creek)
City of Kimberley Mayor Ron McRae	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
City of Penticton Mayor David Perry	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
City of Prince George Mayor Colin Kinsley	30-Sep-03 (Prince George)
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC Sharon Gregson Susan Harney	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Collaborative Visions Society Marie Baptiste	FGS-Sub-48

College Institute Educators' Association of BC Dileep Athaide Roseanne Moran Cindy Oliver	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
College of New Caledonia Dr. Don Precosky Lynn Jacques	30-Sep-03 (Prince George)
College of New Caledonia Students' Association Rob Mealey	30-Sep-03 (Prince George)
College of the Rockies Faculty Association Velma McKay	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Columbia Mountain Open Network Kevin McIsaac	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Comox Valley Accessibility Committee Corinne Mandseth	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce; Canadian Home Builders Association Andrea Wagemaker	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Comox Valley Economic Development Society John Watson	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Comox Valley Women's Resource Centre - Anti Proverty Group Marilyn Hannah Maureen Hoffart	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia Rick Coe	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Consortium 43 Sue McIntyre Gwenda Woodbury	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Consumer Advocacy and Support for Homeowners Society (CASH) Carmen Maretic	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Cornerstones Wellness Centre Joanne Roberts	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Cranbrook & District Chamber of Commerce Melanie Fiorentino	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Cranbrook Development Authority John Sheehan	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Michael Crawford	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Ernest Crepnjak	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Bill Cunningham	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Davidson Yuen Simpson Architects Richard Cook	FGS-Sub-7
Destination Osoyoos Michelle Jefferson	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)

Developmental Disabilities Association Alanna Hendren Paul Sankey	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Jag Dhanowa	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
East Kootenay Community Credit Union Jody Burk	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Phil Edgett	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Elk Valley Coal Corporation Cindy Brunel Darwin Robinson Doug Stokes	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design Students' Union Lisa MacLeod	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Diane Fawcett	30-Sep-03 (Prince George)
Federation of Independent School Associations in BC Fred Herfst Doug Lauson	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Fire Chiefs' Association of BC Len Garis	FGS-Sub-12
Focus on the Family (Canada) Association Derek Rogusky	FGS-Sub-41
Fraser Valley Real Estate Board Reg Davies	FGS-Sub-32
Funcouver Tim Crowhurst	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Gastown Business Improvement Society Jon Stovell	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
Dr. John Gentles	29-Sep-03 (Dawson Creek)
Sheila Gordon-Payne	FGS-Sub-1
Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association Peter Simpson	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce Bob Cross Doug Potentier	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Greater Victoria Film Commission Russ Cowan	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Moira Green	29-Sep-03 (Dawson Creek)
Shannon Guiboche	FGS-Sub-8
Joyce Harrington	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
George Hayes	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Hayes, Stewart, Little & Co. Dan Little	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Linda Hermanson	FGS-Sub-47

IFCVancouver	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
René Botzenhardt	
John Fulton	
Andrew Parkinson	
Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of British Columbia	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Philip Hochstein	
Industrial-Alliance Pacific Life Insurance Company	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Douglas Carrothers	
Initiatives Prince George	30-Sep-03 (Prince George)
Gerry Offet	
Ken Veldman	
Institute of Chartered Accountants of British Columbia	
Gary Chan	30-Sep-03 (Prince George)
John Cowperthwaite	30-Sep-03 (Prince George)
Odd Eidsvik	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Cindy Popescul	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Richard Rees	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Insurance Bureau of Canada	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Lindsay Olson	
Dennis Prouse	
International Forest Products Ltd.; Weyerhaeuser Co. Ltd.; Timberwest Forest Products Ltd.	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
Steve Crombie	
Lawrence Pillon	
Investment Dealers Association of Canada	FGS-Sub-40
Debra Hewson	
Joseph J. Oliver	
Kam Jassal	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
Cathy Jewett	FGS-Sub-36
Martin D. Jones	FGS-Sub-5
Kamloops Child Development Society	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Deborah Frolek	
Kamloops Sexual Assault Counseling Centre	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Cynthia Davis	
Kamloops/Thompson School District #73	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Richard Dickens	
Kimberley Teachers' Association	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Dean Chatterson	
KINBASKET Group of Companies; Shuswap Indian Band	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Matthew Ney	
Don Knight	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Kootenay Livestock Association	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
Don Lancaster	
Faye Street	

KPMG Jeff Omland	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Kwantlen Faculty Association Nancy Clegg Terri Van Steinburg	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Labatt Breweries Western Canada Neil Sweeney	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
Terry Lalari	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Bob Lee	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Lignum Ltd. Conrad Pinette	FGS-Sub-11
Lillooet Learning Communities Society Rod Paynter	FGS-Sub-3
Line Contractors' Association of British Columbia Paddy Hatch	FGS-Sub-25
Christopher Linsdell	FGS-Sub-14
LogicLynx Technologies Chris Holt	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Lord Strathcona Elementary School Parent Advisory Committee Mary MacAulay	FGS-Sub-43
Neil MacKay	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Christina Mader	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Malaspina Students' Union Steve Beasley Stephanie Konefal	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Patrick Maloney	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
Amrinder Mann	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Dr. Linda Marshall	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Dale McClanaghan	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
Dave McGuigan	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Molson Canada Jeff Gaulin	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
Nanaimo Search and Rescue K. McNeill	FGS-Sub-17
Naramata Centre Bill Horne	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
NeuroPartners Canada Dr. Chris Honey	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
New Beginnings Baptist Church James Lee	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Yvonne Nielsen	FGS-Sub-6
Susan & Jack Norie	FGS-Sub-45
North Central Municipal Association Ted Armstrong	FGS-Sub-20

Northern BC Construction Association Rosalind Thorn	30-Sep-03 (Prince George)
Northwest Community College Debbie Stava	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Northwest Community College Students' Association Dan Buck Karen McAthy	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Okanagan Skaha Teachers' Union Garry Litke	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Okanagan University College Students Association Karina Frisque	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Oliver and District Community Economic Development Society Patrick Deakin Jessica Murphy	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Orangeville Raceway Ltd. Chuck Keeling	FGS-Sub-18
Pacific Child and Family Enrichment Society; Cridge Centre for the Family Gillian Bryan Shirley Summers	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council Hon. John Fraser Dr. Brian Riddell	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Parent Advisory Council, Gladstone Secondary School Patricia Fahrni	FGS-Sub-15
Patient Empowerment Society Roderick Louis	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
Penticton and Area Women's Centre Sue Dumontet Tina Sager	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Murray Presley	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Premier's Technology Council Ken Juteau Jim Mutter	07-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Prince George Chamber of Commerce Sherry Sethen Bruce Sutherland	30-Sep-03 (Prince George)
Prince Rupert and District Chamber of Commerce Bill Parmar Gordon Stamp-Vincent	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Prince Rupert Economic Development Commission Victor Prystay	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Prince Rupert Grain; Northwest Corridor Development Jeff Burghardt	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
ProArt Alliance of Greater Victoria Janice O'Briain	FGS-Sub-46

RAIN Project - Communities Learning Network Les Deacon-Rogers	18-Sep-03 (Prince Rupert)
Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver Bill Binnie	FGS-Sub-30
Retail BC Mark Startup	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Retail Council of Canada Kevin Evans	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Louise Richards	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Patrick Rogers	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Michael Rouse	01-Oct-03 (Cranbrook)
School District #35 (Langley) Steve Burton	FGS-Sub-13
School District 63 (Saanich) Board of School Trustees Hanne Kohout	FGS-Sub-35
Shaw Communications Inc. Chris Ewasiuk	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Vern Short	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Sarabjit Singh Nagra	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
South Okanagan Real Estate Board Ann Hayes	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
South Okanagan-Similkameen Brain Injury Society Tina Solary	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Strathcona Broadband Initiative; North Island Broadband Initiative Sharon Bennett	17-Sep-03 (Courtenay)
Jay Strong	FGS-Sub-4
Sunshine Coast Child Care Planning Committee Paul Calder Gayle Duncan	FGS-Sub-19
Surrey Chamber of Commerce Ray Hudson Jim King	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Surrey Tourism and Convention Association Stephen Casson	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Telus Gary Wilson	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Dr. Marco Terwiel	FGS-Sub-39
Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association Deanna Rainey	01-Oct-03 (Penticton)
Colin Topham	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
University College of the Cariboo Faculty Association Dr. Thomas Friedman	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
University of British Columbia Dennis Pavlich	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)

University of British Columbia Alumni Association Martin Ertl Leslie Konantz	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
University Presidents' Council of British Columbia Don Avison	FGS-Sub-21
Urban Development Institute - Kelowna Chapter Ken Webster	02-Oct-03 (Kamloops)
Urban Development Institute - Pacific Region Maureen Enser	FGS-Sub-27
Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre Dr. John Nightingale	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Vancouver Board of Trade Dave Park Al Sello	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
Vancouver Community College Students' Union Christa Peters	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
Vancouver Inner City Parents Group Cynthia Wong	FGS-Sub-37
Vancouver Regional Construction Association Keith Sashaw	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
Vancouver Save Our Schools Catherine Evans	FGS-Sub-9
Vancouver School Board Chris Kelly Adrienne Montani	10-Oct-03 (Surrey)
VI Open Network Society; Victoria Free-Net Association Garth Graham	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
VIATeC Bill Cooke	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Victoria Real Estate Board Diana Devlin Glenn Terrell	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Vista Project Management Corporation Naveen Bains	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Cameron Walls	02-Oct-03 (Vancouver)
WCG International Consultants Ltd. Dr. Jim Rae	17-Oct-03 (Burnaby)
West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund Alison Brewin	FGS-Sub-49
Westpoint Multimedia Nab Gill	08-Oct-03 (Victoria)
Jeanette Wood	FGS-Sub-38
Bill Woollam	FGS-Sub-2
Ron and Pat Young	FGS-Sub-23